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# **CHAPTER 1: THE CHILDREN OF THE NLSY79**

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## **Introduction**

This data users guide provides substantive and technical information about the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult survey data. Updated with each new survey round, this document focuses on the current round of data and includes information from past rounds that is most relevant to using the current data. Users are encouraged to review the guides from previous survey rounds for details on changes in the sample or procedures that may affect their analyses. Guides from prior rounds may also contain information about modules and topics of interest that are no longer included in the current survey. User guides from prior rounds can be accessed at the BLS-NLS website: <<http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy79ch.htm>> or from the CHRR public ftp site: <<ftp://ftp.chrr.ohio-state.edu/usersvc/>>

This first chapter provides an overview of the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult surveys, focusing on issues that are relevant to children of all ages. Chapter 2 discusses the Child data collection and the assessments used to measure the development and environments of the sample children over time. The chapter focuses on what are now called the Children 0-14, since children age 15 and older are no longer assessed. Chapter 3 focuses on the data collection for the young adult children of NLSY79 mothers, including information about accompanying geocode files. Chapter 4 offers some potential research applications that exploit the longitudinal and intercohort aspects of the data. Chapter 5 provides specifics on how to access and use the data files and documentation.

This document is best used in conjunction with a variety of other materials including the *NLSY79 Child Assessments: Selected Tables*, the NLSY79 Child Handbooks, the *NLS Handbook*, the *NLSY79 User's Guide*, and the questionnaires that are used in the field to collect the data for children, young adults and main Youth respondents. The *NLSY79 User's Guide* provides details on the inputs from the mother's record (in the main NLSY79 files) that are used to construct mother-based variables on the Child file. These and other useful materials are available either on line at <<http://www.bls.gov/nls/>> or from NLS User Services at CHRR. Details on documentation can be found in Chapter 5 of this guide.

Substantive questions regarding the data collection and assessments for the younger children should be addressed to Paula Baker at 614-442-7375 (baker.21@osu.edu). Questions regarding the Young Adult component of the study may be addressed to Canada Keck at 614-442-7377 (keck.2@osu.edu). General questions relating to survey content or the utility of the data set for specific research topics may be addressed to Frank Mott at 614-442-7378 (mott.1@osu.edu).

Questions about the availability and cost of public use materials should be addressed to the NLS User Services Office at the Center for Human Resource Research, 614-442-7300 (usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio-state.edu). The Child and Young Adult data are available as a free download online from <<http://www.bls.gov/nls/>>. User comments regarding any aspect of this survey, including suggestions for additions or deletions, are welcomed.

## **Overview of the NLSY79**

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 cohort (NLSY79) is a multi-purpose panel survey that originally included a nationally representative sample of 12,686 men and women

who were all 14 to 21 years of age on December 31, 1978. Annual interviews have been completed with most of these respondents since 1979, with a shift to a biennial interview mode after 1994. This user's guide focuses on information about the children of the women in the NLSY79 Round 20 (R20) survey conducted in the year 2002. As of the 2002 interview round, the NLSY79 women had attained the ages of 37 to 45. The children of these female respondents as of 2002 are mostly below the age of 27 and are estimated to represent about 90 percent of all the children ever to be born to this cohort of women.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, the NLSY79 contains extensive information about the employment, education, training, and family experiences of the respondents. The survey originally included substantial over-samples of African-American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged white, and military youth. Reflecting budget constraints, the latter two over-samples have been largely deleted from the sample. The remaining sample, however, retains its national representation. With appropriate weights, the NLSY79 may be considered as representative of the living members of a national sample of men and women who were 14 to 21 years of age on December 31, 1978. With appropriate weights, the children of the female respondents in this sample may be considered a representative sample of children who have been born to this national sample of women. Readers seeking more detail about the NLSY79 main Youth sample of men and women are referred to the current edition of the *NLS Handbook* and its associated *NLSY79 User's Guide*.

### **The NLSY79 Child Surveys**

Starting in 1986, the children of NLSY79 female respondents have been assessed every two years. The assessments measure cognitive ability, temperament, motor and social development, behavior problems, and self-competence of the children as well as the quality of their home environment. Since 1988, children age 10 and over have completed personal interviews that have asked about a wide range of their schooling, family, peer-related and other attitudes and behaviors.

Starting in 1994, a different type of interview was initiated for the older children of the NLSY79 female respondents. This data collection, subject to constraints noted in Chapter 3, has focused on NLSY79 "young adult children" age 15 and over as of the end of the relevant calendar year (December 31, 2002 for the year 2002 interview round). In this guide, when these older children are the focus, they are referred to as "young adults." When children below age 15 are referenced, they are termed "younger children." In general, references to the full child cohort will be termed "children" or "children of the NLSY79."

### ***The Child Samples***

The NLSY79 child sample is comprised of all children born to NLSY79 mothers. With the primary support from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the children of the NLSY79 mothers have been independently followed and interviewed in various ways starting in 1986. These children have been interviewed and assessed biennially since that date. Since 1988, all of the children age ten and over have completed fairly extensive self-report questionnaires. The content and scope of the child interviews and assessments are discussed in Chapter 2. Starting in 1994, children who have reached the age of 15 by the end of the survey year are no longer assessed but instead

complete personal interviews akin to those given to their mothers during late adolescence and into adulthood. Chapter 3 focuses on the content of the questionnaires administered to these Young Adult children.

### ***The Child & Young Adult Data Collection***

Interviews with the NLSY79 younger children are typically conducted in the respondent's home by experienced, specially trained field staff. Reports are obtained from the children and their mothers and by interviewers trained to assess each child and to provide evaluations of their home environment. Interviews with all children through 1992 were conducted primarily in person using paper and pencil. Beginning in 1994, the primary Young Adult and younger child instruments and assessments were administered using computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). By 2000, all survey instruments were fully computerized. From 1994 to 1998, the primary mode of data collection for the Young Adults was in-person interview. Beginning in 2000, the primary interview mode for the Young Adults shifted to telephone rather than in-home visits. Historically, the field period of the interviews has largely coincided with the main interview field period, although Young Adult telephone interviewing in 2002 began substantially prior to the younger child interviews. Details about the interviewing procedures for the Child and Young Adult surveys may be found in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

### ***Sample Sizes: Who Was Interviewed in 2002?***

As of 2002, a total of 11,340 children have been identified as having been born to the original 6,283 NLSY79 female respondents, mostly during the years that they have been interviewed. A modest number were born prior to the 1979 first interview round. Obviously, an unknown number of additional children have been born to women subsequent to their having attrited from the sample. In 2002, a total of 7567 children, including young adults, were interviewed (see Table 1.1). Of these, 3229 were under age 15 and 4238 were interviewed as young adults. In the context of the child interviews, "interviewed" for children under age 15 means that some information was obtained, in one of the Child interview schedules, from either the mother or child in that survey year. From the perspective of the Young Adult sample, a completion is defined as a case in which at least a major part of the Young Adult CAPI interview was completed. A series of flags in the data file (in the "area of interest" called CHILD BACKGROUND) indicate interview and assessment status for both younger children and young adults.

**NLSY79 mothers.** In 2002, of the 3,955 women interviewed, 3,315 were mothers who reported a total of 8,100 children (see Table 1.1). When appropriate weights are applied, NLSY79 women have had on average about 1.9 children, which is estimated to be more than 90 percent of their ultimate childbearing. A large proportion of the childbearing for this cohort is now behind them. Caution is still advised when generalizing from any selected portion of the child cohort.

**Table 1.1. NLSY79 Mother and Child Samples: 1986-2002 Surveys**

Sample Groups	1979	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
<b>NLSY79 Females</b>										
Interviewed	6,283	5,418	5,312	4,510	4,535	4,480	4,361	4,299	4,113	3,955
<b>NLSY79 Mothers:</b>										
Interviewed		2,922	3,346	3,088	3,325	3,464	3,489	3,533	3,425	3,315
Interviewed; Children also interviewed		2,774	3,196	2,772	2,964	3,212	3,228	3,221	2,934	3,122
<b>NLSY79 Children:</b>										
Born to interviewed mothers		5,255	6,543	6,427	7,255	7,862	8,125	8,395	8,323	8,100
Children not Young Adults						6,622	6,010	5,343	4,438	3,502
Young Adults						1,240	2,113	3,052	3,885	4,598
Interviewed <sup>1</sup>		4,971	6,266	5,803	6,509	7,089	7,103	7,067 <sup>2</sup>	6,417	7,467 <sup>3</sup>
Children not Young Adults						6,109	5,431	4,924	3,392	3,229
Young Adults						980	1,672	2,143	3,025	4,238

NOTE: Sample sizes for all child survey years exclude the 441 female members of the military subsample dropped from interviewing in 1985 and the children born to these women. In addition, sample sizes for 1990 and later surveys exclude female members of the civilian economically disadvantaged, non-black/non-Hispanic subsample, whose children were not eligible for assessment. The exclusion of this sample after 1998 accounts for much of the drop in sample size between 1988 and 1990.

<sup>1</sup> An interview was considered complete if an interviewer was able to directly assess a child, or to obtain information from the mother on the child's background and health.

<sup>2</sup> This total includes 37 children who were assessed or interviewed whose mothers were not interviewed.

<sup>3</sup> This total includes 14 children (age 0-14) who were assessed or interviewed whose mothers were not interviewed and 257 young adult children whose mothers were not interviewed.

Of the 2,328 NLSY79 women who were not interviewed in the 2002 survey round, 441 were members of the military over sample that was dropped after 1984, 890 were from the economically disadvantaged white over sample that was dropped in 1990, and 117 are identified as deceased. Excluding these subsets of respondents means that effective attrition for those who would otherwise be eligible for interview is about 18 percent.

**Children & young adults eligible for interview.** In the first round of the NLSY79 Child survey, all children born to NLSY79 women were eligible to be interviewed. Starting in 1988, children whose usual residence was outside the mother's household were excluded from the sample. This residence restriction, however, applies only to children who are not age-eligible for the Young Adult survey. In 2000 the criteria for both younger children and young adults were restricted (for that survey round only) to exclude a random sample of about 38 percent of the younger children and young adults from the black and Hispanic over samples. This restriction means that while the full set of oversample mothers was contacted in 2000, only about 60 percent of their children under age 21 were part of the fielded sample targeted for interview. In 2002, the oversample cases that were excluded in 2000 were restored to the fielded sample eligible for interview.

Children who are part of the sample of younger children (age 0-14) must reside at least part or full time with the NLSY79 mother respondent in order to be eligible. In 2002, the number of

children reported by mothers interviewed as living at least part-time in the household totaled 3,444.

Young Adult children, with at least one record in the child interview history, are eligible for interview regardless of their residence status. In 1998, the Young Adult interview was limited to youth between the ages of 15 and 20. This age restriction was lifted in 2000.

**Age shift in the child samples.** The age distribution in Table 1.2 underscores the fact that many NLSY79 women are reaching the end of their childbearing years. There has been a gradual change in the mix of the child population from being predominantly a younger child group towards being older, or more of a young adult and even adult population. As of the 2002 survey round, about 5 percent of the overall child sample is over the age of 15 (the “young adults”) and about 20 percent are age 21 and over. Since very few children remain to be born in forthcoming NLSY79 survey rounds, a rapid transition towards an even older child population is evident, with increasing numbers in their 20s and even early 30s. Paralleling this shift, the younger component of the overall sample will be increasingly from middle class households, as they will have been born to women at older ages. This trend implies that within-sample analyses in which comparisons are made between children at different ages need to be done with caution.

Table 1.2 shows that relatively large numbers of children at all ages below 25 were interviewed in the 2002 survey year. Whereas at one time a large proportion of the children had been born to adolescent mothers, in 2002 fully 83 percent of all the children had been born to women age 20 and over. Young adult children comprise about 30 percent of children born to adolescent mothers in the NLSY79. Users are reminded that the 2000 data collection excluded about 38 percent of the children (under age 21) of the minority over-samples, which resulted in 48 percent of the total sample being minority in 2000 compared with 54 percent in 2002. The 1998 data collection was limited to all eligible children under the age of 21 as of the date of interview. Earlier rounds included all age eligible children, subject to the fact that women in the military over-sample were dropped from the interview process after the 1984 survey round and the economically disadvantaged white over-sample with the 1990 data collection round. The sample nonetheless retains sufficient numbers of children from these categories to maintain its full national representation. Appropriate weights are available in each year to adjust the un-weighted sample cases for the minority over-samples and year-to-year sample attrition. A detailed discussion of the sampling weights can be found later in this chapter.

**Sample limitations.** Table 1.3 suggests one other caveat for studies that focus on the consequences of earlier, adolescent childbearing for this cohort of women. A modest proportion of the children (679 of the 7,467 interviewed in 2002) were born prior to the first NLSY79 interview round. If essential explanatory inputs for analysis include pre-1979 points (e.g., employment status in 1977 or early paternal presence in the home), sample size may be temporally constrained because of this left-censoring problem—the unavailability of some data elements for the pre-survey period. All such cases fall in the upper young adult ages, and could affect analyses for young adult children who are 24 or older in 2002.

**Table 1.2. Age of Child by Age of Mother at Birth of Child: NLSY79 Children and Young Adults Interviewed in 2002**

Child Age	≤17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Age of Mother at Birth of Child										35	36	37	38+	Total
										26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34						
LT 1																					1	9	34	44
1																				1	6	17	44	68
2																		1	25	32	23	32		113
3																		20	25	18	21	23		107
4																7	23	29	34	27	21	33		174
5															2	36	29	33	30	26	11	7		174
6														3	31	33	34	26	22	8	14	5		176
7														31	25	44	38	25	14	16	15	3		211
8												3	42	43	42	36	28	30	14	17	1			256
9											3	47	38	50	51	38	25	21	22	3				298
10										4	40	51	50	44	49	26	13	15	3					295
11										50	52	59	42	41	44	28	27	6						349
12								1	44	55	55	55	48	46	36	31	3							374
13							4	40	48	59	58	54	43	34	33	8								381
14 & Ch							11	37	34	31	27	34	16	12	7									209
14 & YA						7	35	32	38	50	42	27	32	13										276
15					7	40	70	51	44	50	58	42	34	3										399
16				7	56	73	65	59	57	49	41	41	7											455
17			6	39	62	53	56	42	46	62	38	7												411
18		3	44	58	57	54	50	61	47	38	3													415
19	4	40	53	52	57	59	53	48	38	2														406
20	27	42	63	56	53	60	55	48	6															410
21	50	43	62	59	44	33	44	4																339
22	63	45	45	59	53	40	4																	309
23	54	37	47	34	46	6																		224
24	64	29	43	36	4																			176
25	70	32	30	4																				136
26	74	35	7																					116
27-31	101	3																						104
Total	545	325	402	406	443	430	444	421	402	450	417	420	352	320	320	287	220	206	190	154	313	181		7467

Note: Child age for children under 15 is measured as of mother's interview date (see C00047.46) and may differ from age at date of child assessment. For children whose mothers were not interviewed in 2002, age at Child Supplement interview date (C00070.48) was used. Age of children 15 and over (young adults) is measured at their young adult date of interview (see Y14343). Age of mother at birth of child is found in the variable C00070. in the CHILD BACKGROUND area of interest of the child data file.



**Table 1.3. Child's Birth Year by Age of Mother at Child's Birth: NLSY79 Children and Young Adults Interviewed in 2002**

Child Birth Year	Age of Mother at Birth of Child																						Total
	≤17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38+	
1970	1																						1
1971	2																						2
1972	5																						5
1973	22																						22
1974	41																						41
1975	77	18																					95
1976	69	40	20																				129
1977	73	28	48	24																			173
1978	67	39	44	34	27																		211
1979	67	51	46	48	55	28																	295
1980	74	45	62	59	47	42	28																357
1981	30	44	62	68	56	54	55	20															389
1982	17	48	52	46	55	59	48	63	31														419
1983		12	50	58	60	55	52	57	48	26													418
1984			18	49	60	55	63	46	43	59	27												420
1985				20	62	73	61	58	57	49	40	29											449
1986					21	51	64	49	45	43	56	50	31										410
1987						13	58	50	52	74	59	38	42	16									402
1988							15	58	58	57	47	45	33	30	19								362
1989								20	55	62	66	70	53	37	41	20							424
1990									13	63	50	52	46	39	32	29	14						338
1991										17	51	67	34	50	44	29	23	13					328
1992											21	44	53	48	56	40	17	21	10				310
1993												25	42	43	52	31	27	19	26	5			270
1994													18	40	28	41	34	30	11	23	5		230
1995														17	28	33	33	26	16	12	19	5	189
1996															20	40	32	35	22	20	11	7	187
1997																24	32	29	37	24	14	17	177
1998																	8	21	30	22	23	31	135
1999																		12	30	25	22	24	113
2000																			8	18	18	37	81
2001																				5	20	43	68
2002																						17	17
Total	545	325	402	406	443	430	444	421	402	450	417	420	352	320	320	287	220	206	190	154	132	181	7467

The increasing heterogeneity of the child sample may also be noted in other ways from Table 1.2 and Table 1.3. For example, analyses focusing on children in the adolescent age range of ten to nineteen can now include a substantial number of children who have been born to mothers who were age 20 and over at the birth of the child. Having noted this increase in sample heterogeneity over the years, the user should remain mindful that the oldest and youngest children in the sample are likely to come from families that differ in their socio-economic characteristics. However, it is also becoming increasingly reasonable to generalize from the NLSY79 sample of children to broader representations of selected U.S. child populations; overall, it is worth reiterating that as of this date, the cohort of women have completed about 90 percent of their childbearing. The younger child sample encompasses 3,970 of the 7,467 children and young adults interviewed in 2002, or more than half of the child sample.

### *Sample Changes over Time*

The increasing heterogeneity of the child sample over time may be noted from Table 1.4. This table summarizes the age mix as well as the race/ethnic mix of the child sample as it moves forward in time from 1986, the first year of the child interviews, to 2002. Over time, there is a gradual transition towards an older average age at interview. Notwithstanding this increase in age, the *overall* sample has actually changed very little over time in its racial and ethnic makeup. There has been some counterbalancing between higher minority birthrates and the reality that a higher proportion of the births in recent years are to older, white women. The reader may also note from Table 1.4 that sample size variations over the years have been considerable, largely reflecting the variations in data collection already noted; the decline from 1988 to 1990 largely reflected the removal of the economically disadvantaged white over-sample. The slight decline from 1996 to 1998 was related to the capping of interviews in that year only at age 20; and the decline from 1998 to 2000 reflected the one time exclusion of a part of the black and Hispanic over-samples. In the 2002 interview round, there are no age or other sample exclusions, which accounts for the increase in sample size between 2000 and 2002. This increase is most evident in the young adult ages as the larger age cohorts continue to shift from child to young adult.

**Table 1.4. NLSY79 Child Sample Sizes by Age and Race/Ethnicity: 1986–2002**

	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
Total Interviewed	4971	6266	5803	6509	7089	7103	7067	6417	7467
<b>By Age<sup>1</sup></b>									
Birth to 9 Years	4676	5380	4508	4430	4154	3480	2978	1912	1621
10 to 14 Years	294	851	1158	1700	2084	1951	1996	1480	1608
15 Years & Older	1	35	137	379	851	1672	2143	3025	4238
<b>By Race/Ethnicity</b>									
Hispanic	937	1158	1304	1483	1546	1520	1550	1193	1625
Black	1604	1895	1994	2133	2350	2330	2229	1914	2412
Non-black/non-Hispanic	2430	3213	2505	2893	3193	3253	3288	3310	3430

<sup>1</sup> Starting in 1994, children who are age 15 by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the interview year are interviewed as young adults. They are counted in this table as 15 years and older though the chronological age at the time of the actual interview might be 14 years for some respondents. Age for children under the age of 15 refers to their age at their mother's interview date.

***Selecting an Age Variable: A Cautionary Note***

The NLSY79 Child and Young Adult data files include several distinct child age variables at each survey point. The most appropriate age variable to use may depend on one's research objectives. All the created child age variables in the CHILD BACKGROUND area of interest are computed in months, regardless of whether they refer to children who are currently 0-14 or young adults who are now 15 and older. The codebook, however, displays these "age in months" variables in grouped ranges for ease of viewing. The "age of child at mother's interview date" variables that are assigned to the CHILD BACKGROUND area of interest are created for all children, regardless of age. Also, children who are currently young adults are still represented in the variables that indicate age at assessment date. These variables describe the age of the (now) young adult at the time s/he was assessed in prior survey rounds.

The variable that describes the mother's age at the birth of the child is computed in years (MAGEBIR) as is the mother's age at interview date (AGEMOM) which is in the FAMILY BACKGROUND area of interest. The ages for young adult children, which are available in the Young Adult areas of interest, are also computed in years (e.g., AGE1B, AGEDEC, AGEINT). Users are encouraged to use the created age variables rather than any age variables that are direct pick-ups from the questionnaires in the various rounds.

**Age variables for younger children.** There are four relevant age variables for younger children. In most but not all instances, the values for these age variables will be the same. Unlike the age variables for the young adults, these age variables are computed in months, so users who prefer a variable in which the unit is in "years" will need to do a simple conversion. One principal child age variable references the age of the child as of the mother's interview date. Another created age variable is linked to the date the Mother Supplement was administered. This variable, termed "Child age at mother supplement date," is appropriate to use when one's research utilizes an assessment that was administered as part of the Mother Supplement questionnaire. Similarly, there is a child assessment age based on the date the interviewer-administered assessments were given. Finally, there is a PPVT age variable that references the date that the child completed the PPVT. All of these issues are clarified further in Chapter 2.

Users should be aware that over the interview years occasional revisions have been made to a child's date of birth if it was found to be in error. However, the questions and assessments administered to a child were contingent on the child's age as specified at the time. For a variety of reasons, no attempt has been made to alter the historical age record when a date of birth was revised. Thus, if one is using age-sensitive information from prior interview points, two options are often possible; one may recreate an age variable based on the most recent date of birth of child in conjunction with the interview date in that year. The second option is to use the set of age variables from that year, a variable that will be consistent with all the other information gathered from the child in that year. In most instances, this later option is probably the preferred solution. Finally, in almost no instance would it be appropriate to simply decrement a child's age by the number of years between the most recent interview and the interview round of interest. This can often lead to incorrect estimates for the reason noted above. Additional information about some of these issues as well as the file location of the appropriate age variables is discussed further in Chapters 2 and 3.

**Young adult age variables.** There are two young adult age variables most appropriate for use. In contrast with the variables for the younger children, these are computed as age-in-years. One references the young adult's age at his or her interview date, and is the variable that most users would access. The second is an age that references the last day of the calendar year. This variable is included because December 31 of a given reference year defines the eligibility of a child for inclusion in the young adult sample. Starting in 1994, a child must be 15 or older as of that date to be included in the young adult sample. This is the reason that the tables in this report that provide child age as of an interview date split the 14-year-old group between a child and young adult component. The age at end of year variable can also be useful for defining a sample according to an unchanging age cohort as of any interview year. Interview dates are rarely exactly two years apart; an individual who is age 20 at one interview point, while typically 18 at the preceding interview, might possibly have been 19 or 17.

### **Patterning of Child Interview Frequency**

This section provides sample sizes for the number of times younger children and young adults of different ages have been interviewed over the life course of the survey. Given that the child interviewing process began with the 1986 interview round and has continued on a biennial basis through 2002, the maximum number of interviews a child respondent could have to date is nine<sup>1</sup>. Clearly, the content varies considerably between the Child and Young Adult interviews, partly because in recent rounds only younger children were assessed, and partly because many of the questions are life cycle specific. Many questions that might be relevant for an eight- or a fourteen-year old might not be appropriate for an older adolescent. Additionally, there have been some changes in questions and question wording over time that suggest that researchers who are using these data in a longitudinal manner need to carefully review the content of the questions they are using. This issue is considered in various ways in the chapters that follow.

The Child and Young adult surveys are characterized by inherently different question structure, format of data collection, and indeed potentially different research agendas. It is therefore useful to present separately the sample sizes for younger and older children, even though the ultimate research agenda in many instances may join these two sample types. Table 1.5 presents the number of interviews completed by children ever interviewed between 1986 and 2002. Table 1.5 also references December 31 of each relevant survey year rather than the survey date because the age determination for inclusion as a young adult rather than a younger child was the age as of the end of the calendar year. This method of computing age avoids a need to split the fourteen-year old age group between a younger child and a young adult component. Whether one uses a survey date or end of year age typically has little impact on the magnitude of age-specific sample sizes. Most estimates of sample size for younger child presented in this volume use child age as of the survey date. This is the reason why sample sizes by age presented across tables may not always be identical.

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: The maximum number of interview points for a younger child would be eight, since any child who entered the survey at birth would be of young adult age by the 2002 interview date.

**Table 1.5. NLSY79 Younger Children: Number of Interviews by Race/Ethnicity and Age as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002**

Age of Child	Number of Interviews								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
<b>All Races</b>									
<1 Year	17								17
1 Year	68								68
2 Years	38	53							91
3 Years	15	105							120
4 Years	17	77	54						148
5 Years	18	28	154						200
6 Years	14	24	97	80					215
7 Years	14	26	42	147					229
8 Years	12	21	39	112	100				284
9 Years	13	18	31	60	209				331
10 Years	8	20	24	43	161	122			378
11 Years	12	14	19	29	96	236			406
12 Years	18	5	17	38	61	154	143		436
13 Years	15	16	14	16	43	111	306		521
14 Years	80	16	16	12	34	67	147	161	533
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>3,977</b>
<b>Hispanic Mother</b>									
<1 Year	2								2
1 Year	23								23
2 Years	9	13							22
3 Years	3	30							33
4 Years	4	16	8						28
5 Years	6	7	28						41
6 Years	4	7	18	12					41
7 Years	5	6	16	25					52
8 Years	1	9	7	28	9				54
9 Years	2	8	9	17	25				61
10 Years	3	5	7	17	32	19			83
11 Years	6	4	1	5	32	37			85
12 Years	6	3	4	11	15	29	22		90
13 Years	5	2	2	8	7	35	50		109
14 Years	6	3	4	1	3	22	36	25	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>824</b>

**Table 1.5. NLSY79 Younger Children: Number of Interviews by Race/Ethnicity and Age as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002 (continued)**

Age of Child	Number of Interviews								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
<b>Black Mother</b>									
<1 Year	6								6
1 Year	8								8
2 Years	15	13							28
3 Years	2	20							22
4 Years	7	15	12						34
5 Years	4	10	28						42
6 Years	4	7	18	18					47
7 Years	3	5	13	33					54
8 Years	5	3	15	21	17				61
9 Years	4	5	10	30	50				99
10 Years	2	1	5	11	41	26			86
11 Years	1	4	5	10	32	47			99
12 Years	5		2	8	23	41	29		108
13 Years	2	5	3	4	14	43	86		157
14 Years	3	4	1	3	12	24	44	46	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>988</b>
<b>White Mother</b>									
<1 Year	9								9
1 Year	37								37
2 Years	14	27							41
3 Years	10	55							65
4 Years	6	46	34						86
5 Years	8	11	98						117
6 Years	6	10	61	50					127
7 Years	6	15	13	89					123
8 Years	6	9	17	63	74				169
9 Years	7	5	12	13	134				171
10 Years	3	14	12	15	88	77			209
11 Years	5	6	13	14	32	152			222
12 Years	7	2	11	19	23	84	92		238
13 Years	8	9	9	4	22	33	170		255
14 Years	71	9	11	8	19	21	67	90	296
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>2,165</b>

Table 1.5 indicates the total number of interviews reported for each of the younger children who have been interviewed at some point since 1986. We use 1986 as the starting point for this cumulative count, as 1986 was the first year that children of the NLSY79 were assessed. As noted above, the greatest number of possible interviews for any child in 2000 would be eight biennial interviews between 1986 and 2002. However, to have eight interviews, a child would have had to have been a newborn whose birthday occurred early in the year (most 1986 interviews occurred early in that year), and have been interviewed at all eight possible survey

points. Only 161 of the younger children age 14 at the end of 2002 fall into that category. However, Table 1.5 shows that much larger numbers of children fall into all the other interview frequency categories. Children who fall into the older age categories as of 2002, but who have completed only a small number of interviews (e.g., 11 year olds with only one or two interview points) have missed some interviews. For example, an 11 year old in 2002 could have six potential completed interviews. Note that there are 91 eleven year olds as of 2002 who have completed four or fewer interviews. The implications of repeat interviewing for these younger children are expanded on in Chapter 2, where the extent of interview repetition is connected with the specific cognitive and socio-emotional assessments that the children complete at various ages.

Table 1.6 extends this interview repetition notion to the young adult component of the survey. Since the young adult interview, which is detailed in Chapter 3, has been ongoing only since 1994, the maximum number of young adult interviews possible by 2002 is five. This maximum would be limited to young adults who are between 23 and 25 years of age as of the end of the 2002 calendar year. It should be recalled that young adults age 21 or over at the *date of the 1998 interview* were not interviewed in that year. This leads to a potential four-year interview gap, between 1996 and 2000, for young adults who are 25 or older as of the end of 2002. From 2002 forward, the expectation is that the young adult sample will include all youth age 15 and over. Also, recall that while the age references the end of 2002, a particular young adult was not necessarily interviewed in that year. Of the 4648 young adults included in Table 1.6, about 91 percent (4238) of the sample respondents were interviewed in 2002. Table 1.6 also shows that there are substantial numbers of young adults who have four young adult interview points and a large number who have had three interviews as young adults since 1994. Cumulatively, across both the child and young adult interviews, there are almost 2000 young adults who have been interviewed every interview round since 1986. In this regard, there are relatively large samples of black, Hispanic and non-Hispanic white (hereafter termed white) young adults who fall in this eight-interview category.

**Table 1.6. Age of YA at December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002 by YA, Child, and Total Interviews**

		Type of Interview													
		Young Adult Interview					Child Assessment				Total # of Interviews				
Age of Young Adult		# Interviews													
		1	2	3	4	5	0-5	6	7	8	0-5	6	7	8	9
15 Years 16 Years 17 Years 18 Years 19 Years 20 Years 21 Years 22 Years 23 to 25 26 to 32		402					59	83	260		19	40	83	260	
		410					41	82	226	61	20	21	82	226	61
		100	366				45	59	362		13	11	41	105	296
		104	339				46	48	349		20	13	30	99	281
		40	110	310			121	339			23	22	58	102	255
		57	129	289	1		108	368			29	20	61	115	251
		28	51	116	246		441				37	21	54	112	217
		27	44	111	229		411				32	26	54	102	197
		43	65	74	155	453	790				101	45	83	170	391
		21	63	61	204		349				68	50	76	155	
Total All	4648	1232	1167	961	835	453	2403	979	1197	61	362	269	622	1446	1949
Race of Mother	Age of YA														
15 Years 16 Years 17 Years 18 Years 19 Years 20 Years 21 Years 22 Years 23 to 25 26 to 32		100					23	29	48		8	15	29	48	
		90					12	27	43	8	7	5	27	43	8
		32	73				13	19	73		3	4	15	28	55
		34	62				10	19	67		5	3	9	34	45
	Hispanic	10	34	71			31	84			3	6	17	33	56
		21	48	50			46	73			11	9	25	35	39
		10	17	38	48		113				12	10	17	31	43
		4	10	31	43		88				8	5	19	21	35
		13	15	20	33	99	180				29	14	19	41	77
		2	7	17	36		62				10	8	20	24	
Total Hispanics	1068	316	266	227	160	99	578	251	231	8	96	79	197	338	358
15 Years 16 Years 17 Years 18 Years 19 Years 20 Years 21 Years 22 Years 23 to 25 26 to 32		115					12	33	70		3	9	33	70	
		131					16	33	64	18	5	11	33	64	18
		46	100				14	20	112		5	3	11	52	75
		47	92				16	11	112		6	7	10	34	82
	Blacks	17	52	99			52	116			7	11	31	40	79
		16	54	95	1		31	135			7	4	19	56	80
		8	14	55	84		161				13	5	19	49	75
		9	15	55	77		156				11	8	17	51	69
		11	21	32	75	210	349				33	16	38	81	181
		14	38	29	119		200				43	28	40	89	
Total Blacks	1731	414	386	365	356	210	1007	348	358	18	133	102	251	586	659
15 Years 16 Years 17 Years 18 Years 19 Years 20 Years 21 Years 22 Years 23 to 25 26 to 32		187					24	21	142		8	16	21	142	
		189					13	22	119	35	8	5	22	119	35
		22	193				18	20	177		5	4	15	25	166
		23	185				20	18	170		9	3	11	31	154
	Whites	13	24	140			38	139			13	5	10	29	120
		20	27	144			31	160			11	7	17	24	132
		10	20	23	114		167				12	6	18	32	99
		14	19	25	109		167				13	13	18	30	93
		19	29	22	47	144	261				39	15	26	48	133
		5	18	15	49		87				15	14	16	42	
Total Whites	1849	502	515	369	319	144	826	380	608	35	133	88	174	522	932



Table 1.6 shows that most of the young adults have had a number of interviews prior to reaching age 15, and then between one and five interviews since that date. Chapter 2 details the kinds of information that were collected from and about the younger children, and Chapter 3 focuses on the data collection since age 15. The nature of the data collection changes in fundamental ways when a youth transitions from being a younger child to being a young adult. Below age 15, children are administered (or their mother completes) a variety of assessments. At all these ages the mother also provides a variety of information about the child's health, education, and selected other items, that are detailed in Chapter 2. Since 1988, children age ten and over self-administer a set of questions about their own behaviors and attitudes in a variety of domains, including education, family and peer interaction, normative and non-normative attitudes and behaviors.

Starting 1994, once the children reach 15, they complete the Young Adults personal interview designed to address most of the major dimensions of their lives—schooling, employment, family, peer interactions and issues of sexuality, and other behaviors and attitudes that permit researchers to examine in context the experiences of these youth in a holistic manner. A flow diagram that would cross the possible eight survey points for these youth encompassing the 1986 to 2002 period would describe a coherent data collection process that typically follows a child from his or her preadolescent years, describing the child development process in some detail, parallel family and child behaviors and attitudes, and culminate in a kaleidoscope, or moving picture of his later adolescent-early adult transitions to adulthood. Chapter 4 offers an overview of key data elements and suggests some research agendas for which this data set is particularly appropriate. Tables 1.5 and 1.6 clarify the size of the sample that permit one to maximize the panel dimensions of the data set

### **Pooling Sample Sizes**

The panel dimension of the NLSY79 data collection permits one to cumulate sample cases for children at specified ages across survey points, thus attaining rather substantial sample sizes for children at specific ages. Pooling in this manner also can greatly enhance the heterogeneity of the sample for specific research topics. The trade off to this methodology is that the ability to follow a particular age cohort across survey years becomes somewhat more limited, although it is still doable for selected research topics. Table 1.7 highlights potential sample sizes using this approach.

**Table 1.7. NLSY79 Young Adult Children: Sample Sizes for Pooled Age Groups**

Younger Children			
Pooled Age Groups 1986-2002	Total Possible #	Males	Females
0 year olds	2661	1389	1272
1 year olds	3023	1537	1486
2 year olds	3184	1609	1575
3 year olds	3375	1709	1666
4 year olds	3463	1754	1709
5 year olds	3556	1815	1741
6 year olds	3501	1788	1713
7 year olds	3532	1805	1727
8 year olds	3449	1731	1718
9 year olds	3342	1705	1637
10 year olds	3211	1612	1599
11 year olds	2996	1528	1468
12 year olds	2770	1405	1365
13 year olds	2538	1308	1230
14 year olds	1428	713	715
Young Adult Children			
Pooled Age Groups 1994-2002	Total Possible #	Males	Females
14 Year Olds	1055	543	512
15 Year Olds	1849	928	921
16 Year Olds	1747	880	867
17 Year Olds	1479	743	736
18 Year Olds	1385	662	723
19 Year Olds	1091	531	560
20 Year Olds	1035	486	549
21 Year Olds	681	363	318
22 Year Olds	565	272	293
23 Year Olds	378	194	184
24 Year Olds	323	159	164
25 Year Olds	196	97	99
26 Year Olds	150	77	73
27 Year Olds	72	36	36
28 Year Olds	36	16	20
29 Year Olds	10	7	3
30 Year Olds	3	1	2
31 Year Olds	1	0	1

NOTE: Ages are computed as of survey dates. For younger children, the counts are cumulative from 1986 to the 2002 interview and are based on a child being interviewed in at least one survey year. Young adults are counted if they have been interviewed, from 1994 to 2002 interview, in at least one year. Starting in 1994, children who are 14 at the survey date but who would reach age 15 by the end of the survey year are eligible for the Young Adult survey and are thus counted as young adults. Children, who were age 15 or older in any of the survey years prior to 1994, are not represented in this table unless they were interviewed as young adults from 1994 to the present.

From the perspective of the younger children, it is possible to attain single year of age samples numbering in the thousands for specific research efforts. For example, if one wishes

to examine associations between scores on the digit span assessment and other factors for seven year olds, it would be possible to cumulate a sample of more than 3,000 seven year old children from the first to the current assessment survey year. Because these children would have been born to mothers in all years between 1979 and 1993 (see Table 1.3), the mothers of these children would range in age from their early teens to their early thirties. The relevance of this pooling approach for younger child evaluation, utilizing various assessments, will be considered further in Chapter 2.

Parallel estimates can be found for young adults, even though the magnitude of the sample sizes does not yet reach the level of the younger children. This difference stems from the fact that the young adult interviews have only been on going since the 1994 survey round, so no single year of age cumulative estimate can include more than five points. Nonetheless, the number of cases cumulated in this way for ages 15 to 18 all attain well over 1000 cases. Returning to Table 1.3, it is worth noting that this sample cumulation modestly increases the heterogeneity of these young adult samples. For example, cumulating cases at these early young adult ages expands the age of the mothers at children's birth from mid-adolescence to the late twenties. Of course, using appropriate statistical technology permits one to collapse sample cases across several young adult age groups, building to a very large, quite heterogeneous sample size.

### **Sibling and Cousin Samples**

When the sample selection for NLSY79 was made, all individuals living in the selected households who were between the ages of 14 and 21 on December 31, 1978 were selected for sample inclusion. In many instances, siblings were included in the original sample. This has methodological implications for those who are concerned about the lack of complete independence between all of the NLSY79 cases. From the perspective of the children of the NLSY79, the particular focus here is on the main Youth sisters who are respondents in the sample. The *NLSY79 User's Guide* details this information, so it is not considered extensively here. The focus in this section is on the children who have been born to the female respondents in this sample. From the child's perspective, children of sisters are cousins to each other. Over the course of the survey years, more than 3000 children in the sample have been identified as having an aunt in the main NLSY79 sample. Most of these children have one aunt, but smaller numbers have multiple aunts. While the number of children who are cousins is considerable, the precise numbers available for a particular research project are contingent on the objectives of the research. For example, will the researcher limit the sample to children or women interviewed in only the current survey year or will the researcher include mothers or children interviewed in one or more of the earlier survey rounds?

More typically, researchers utilize the large number of *child* sibling sample cases that have been born to the female respondents. As seen in Table 1.8 (which focuses on the children of women interviewed in 2002), most of the women interviewed have had more than one child, including a rather large sample of women who have had three or more children, as they approach the end of their childbearing years. In addition to multiple births, there are many family units where the two or more children are widely spaced in age, thus enhancing the possibility of exploring the impact of childbearing on children that have been born to the same

mother but at different maternal life cycle stages. This table is limited to women who have been interviewed in 2002 and their children. Larger sample sizes can be generated by incorporating into one's sample women who were not interviewed in the current survey year but who had been interviewed in earlier survey rounds.

**Table 1.8. NLSY79 Women Interviewed in 2002 by Number and Ages of Children and by Race/Ethnicity**

Type of Household (Female)	Age of Child(ren)	Number of Households			
		Hispanic	Black	White	Total
Females with no children		89	197	354	640
Family units 1 or more child					3315
Mothers with 1 child	< 6 years old	18	17	44	79
	6-9 years old	11	22	54	87
	10-14 years old	23	44	99	166
	15+ years old	46	127	142	315
	Total	98	210	339	647
Mothers with 2 children	Both < 6 years old	8	8	27	43
	Both 6-9 years old	4	8	29	41
	Both 10-14 years old	19	11	82	112
	Both 15+ years old	93	160	276	529
	Older 6-9, Younger < 6	11	9	61	81
	Older 10-14, Younger < 6	3	8	21	32
	Older 15+, Younger < 6	11	9	11	31
	Older 10-14, Younger 6-9	15	22	91	128
	Older 15+, Younger 6-9	19	27	22	68
	Older 15+, Younger 10-14	62	79	152	293
	Total	245	341	772	1358
Mothers with 3 or more children	All < 6 years old	0	1	2	3
	All 6-9 years old	0	0	3	3
	All 10-14 years old	2	1	6	9
	All 15+ years old	75	159	140	374
	Oldest 6-9, Youngest < 6	5	5	23	33
	Oldest 10-14, Youngest < 6	12	6	36	54
	Oldest 15+, Youngest < 6	47	53	52	152
	Oldest 10-14, Youngest 6-9	5	12	41	58
	Oldest 15+, Youngest 6-9	57	76	82	215
	Oldest 15+, Youngest 10-14	105	149	155	409
	Total	308	462	540	1310

NLSY79 female respondents who are sisters, as well as children born to those sisters, can be readily identified. NLSY79 female respondents who are sisters and who were resident in the

same household when the sample was selected can be identified by variables on the child file called SISTID1-3 (C00010.00-C00012.00). Children born to a particular respondent all share the same stem as the ID of their mother, with an additional two-digit identifier (01, 02 etc.) that typically (although not in all cases) clarifies their sibling placement.

### **Using the Sampling Weights**

The sampling weights for younger children and young adults (1) adjust the unweighted data for sample attrition of mothers and their children since the first survey round (1979) and the sample reduction due to the loss of the military and economically disadvantaged white oversample and (2) adjust the sample for the over-representation of black and Hispanic youth. For those interested in generating population estimates for prior survey rounds, sampling weights for those survey rounds are available. Using these weights translates the unweighted sample of children into a population that represents all children who have been born by that date to a nationally representative sample of women who were 14 to 21 on December 31, 1978. Beginning in 2002, a revised algorithm was used to compute the sampling weights. For the 1994-2000 survey years, two sampling weight variables are available for each year: the originally released sampling weight and a revised weight using the new algorithm.

Weights are computed only for younger children or young adults who have been interviewed in a given year. *Children not assessed and young adults not interviewed in a given year are assigned a weight of zero for that year.* Table 1.9 lists the complete set of child, young adult, and mother sampling weights.

**Table 1.9. NLSY79 Child, Young Adult, and Mother Sampling Weights**

Reference Number	Variable Description	Question Number	Year	Area of Interest
C00700.04	Sampling Weight of Mother	SAMPWT79	1979	FAMILY BACKGROUND
C05812.	Child Sampling Weight 1986	CSAMWT86	1986	ASSESSMENT 1986
C08007.	Child Sampling Weight 1988	CSAMWT88	1988	ASSESSMENT 1988
C09999.	Child Sampling Weight 1990	CSAMWT90	1990	ASSESSMENT 1990
C11999.	Child Sampling Weight 1992	CSAMWT92	1992	ASSESSMENT 1992
C15089.	Child Sampling Weight 1994 <sup>t</sup>	CSAMWT94	1994	ASSESSMENT 1994
C15658.	Child Sampling Weight 1996	CSAMWT96	1996	ASSESSMENT 1996
C18012.	Child Sampling Weight 1998	CSAMWT98	1998	ASSESSMENT 1998
C24955.	Child Sampling Weight 2000	CSAMWT2000	2000	ASSESSMENT 2000
C05812.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 1986	CSAMWT1986_REV	1986	ASSESSMENT 1986
C08007.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 1988	CSAMWT1988_REV	1988	ASSESSMENT 1988
C09999.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 1990	CSAMWT1990_REV	1990	ASSESSMENT 1990
C11999.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 1992	CSAMWT1992_REV	1992	ASSESSMENT 1992
C15089.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 1994	CSAMWT1994_REV	1994	ASSESSMENT 1994
C15658.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 1996	CSAMWT1996_REV	1996	ASSESSMENT 1996
C18012.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 1998	CSAMWT1998_REV	1998	ASSESSMENT 1998
C24955.01	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 2000	CSAMWT2000_REV	2000	ASSESSMENT 2000
C25240.	Child Sampling Weight – Revised 2002	CSAMWT2002_REV <sup>1</sup>	2002	ASSESSMENT 2002
Y03565.	Young Adult Sampling Weight 1994	YA94WEIGHT	1994	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y06507.	Young Adult Sampling Weight 1996	YA96WEIGHT	1996	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y09469.	Young Adult Sampling Weight 1998	YA98WEIGHT	1998	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y11923.	Young Adult Sampling Weight 2000	YA00WEIGHT	2000	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y03565.01	Revised Young Adult Sampling Weight 1994	YA94WEIGHT_REVISED	1994	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y06507.01	Revised Young Adult Sampling Weight 1996	YA96WEIGHT_REVISED	1996	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y09469.01	Revised Young Adult Sampling Weight 1998	YA98WEIGHT_REVISED	1998	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y11923.01	Revised Young Adult Sampling Weight 2000	YA00WEIGHT_REVISED	2000	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES
Y14350.00	Young Adult Sampling Weight 2002	YA02WEIGHT	2002	YA COMMON KEY VARIABLES

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: The REV suffix refers to the revised algorithm used to generate the sampling weights. This terminology is not applied to the question name for the 2002 Young Adult sampling weight but the revised algorithm was used to compute all child and young adult sampling weights in 2002.

The child sampling weights adjust for sample attrition of NLSY79 mothers and children (including the loss of the military and white oversamples) and for over-representation of black and Hispanic respondents. Each set of cross-sectional child sampling weights is computed by multiplying the mother's 1979 sampling weight by a factor that is the reciprocal of the rate at which children in particular age/sample-type/sex cells are assessed or interviewed.

Starting with the 2002 child survey round, an updated automated computation procedure was instituted to make the weighting process more transparent for researchers. The set of SAS programs allows users to create custom sets of weights for analyses that require more than cross-sectional weighting information. The automated process was designed both to sum to the same population totals and to follow the same procedures as done previously. Because of slight differences in the results, the 2002 data release contains two sets of cross-sectional

weighting variables: (1) the weights released previously over time from 1986-2000 and (2) a revised set that recreates the original, using the new program for every year from 1986 to 2002. Users should find minimal differences between the two series but are strongly encouraged to check if switching between the two types of weights affects their results.

The 2002 public release contains a complete set of custom child weights for all child survey years in which values are assigned according to the following criteria:

- Each non-interviewed child's weight = 0.
- Each interviewed child's weight is equal to the mother's weight multiplied by the number of children her interviewed child represents.
- Every interviewed child represents him/her self plus the number of non-interviewed, known children, plus the number of children estimated to have been born to non-interviewed mothers. This last set of imputed children is determined by determining the number of years since the mother was last interviewed, and assigning the same number and ages of children born based on what was reported for interviewed mothers of the same sex and race.

In the other NLS cohorts, the cell collapsing code is relatively complex and allows the program to merge almost any set of adjacent cells. In creating the weights or the Child-YA cohort the cell collapsing code is simpler because to date the only collapsing has occurred among the oldest children. Generally cells were collapsed as follows:

- Only the end points are collapsed (oldest and youngest kids)
- The end point is the same for males and females (to follow how it is done prior to the custom weighting program)
- Cells are collapsed if there are less than 10 observed children

Researchers who need to weight individuals who participated in multiple survey rounds (i.e., such as all children who participated in 1988-1998) are referred to the custom weighting program located on the NLS-BLS website: <<http://www.bls.gov/nls>>. We caution users that comparing weighted estimates across years can be risky as the composition of the sample can change in subtle ways depending on who was interviewed.

### **Research Based on the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult Data**

The within and cross generation research possibilities offered by this data set are considerable. They overlap the interests of researchers in a rather wide range of intellectual disciplines. This chapter has highlighted a number of data and sample considerations that are relevant to many research agendas, suggesting strengths and limitations of this panel data set.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide considerable detail about the contents of the younger child and young adult data files. Chapter 4 suggests how the data set can be used for mainstream research topics in sociology, economics, child development, public health, and several other related disciplines. Major strengths of the NLSY79 child data are the panel and intercohort dimensions of the data collections. It is possible to follow large samples of children across much of their lifespan. Chapter 4 focuses on analytical connections over the life course, suggesting a number of potential within and cross-disciplinary research possibilities. In this

chapter, the thrust of the discussion is on longitudinal dimensions that deal directly with the sample sizes that are available for different kinds of longitudinal research, in a generic sense. This discussion looks at three specific data perspectives: the number of cases available across surveys for children of different ages as of the current survey; the possibility for enhancing sample sizes across narrowly defined age groups, by cumulating children of specified ages at different survey points; and the possibilities for sibling and cousin research that exist because the original main respondent sample selection included all individuals in a household that were between the ages of 14 and 21, and the data collection for the children of the female respondents includes multiple interviews with all of the children.